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## Vallejo trustees look at slashing \$6.5 million from \$8 million in possible cuts indentified from budget

**By Shauntel Lowe**

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The Vallejo school board Wednesday will consider more than \$8 million in budget cuts that could cost dozens of people their jobs, increase teacher classloads and eliminate some student programs and resources.

District officials are recommending the board adopt \$6.5 million of the proposed cuts to help deal with a projected \$6.175 million deficit next school year.

The board meeting will be held at 6 p.m., instead of the usual 5 p.m. start time, at the district office, 665 Walnut Ave., Mare Island.

The cuts have been discussed at two recent board meetings, with proposed cuts to Adult Education, unspecified maintenance and grounds crew layoffs and increased class sizes receiving the most public input.

The final budget cut recommendation list for Wednesday's meeting includes \$100,000 more to be cut from classified employee overtime allocations, for a total of \$250,000. That would represent a 44 percent reduction in overtime costs.

State Administrator Richard Damelio said department heads would be asked to stay within the new budget should the board approve the suggested cuts.

Previously proposed cuts are mainly items subject to employee union negotiations, like a shorter school year and elimination of voluntary staff development days that pay stipends.

One suggested cut -- eliminating the Peer Assistance and Review Program for teachers -- is on the final list though district officials and union leaders disagree on whether the decision must be

negotiated. The program, known as PAR, is mentioned in the Vallejo Education Association contract.

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Teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluations are supposed to receive help from a mentor through the program but some teachers ignore that requirement without consequence, teachers union president Christal Watts said.

Damelio, at a budget forum, agreed that the program is not as effective as needed and said that is why it is on the chopping block.

The push to cut PAR, combined with the proposed elimination of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance Program (BTSA), comes as the teachers union and district head into mediation over the long-expired union contract.

Teachers have voiced concern that they are being asked to do more without the necessary support.

District officials have said other support would be

developed in place of PAR.

Wednesday's meeting agenda also includes:

- \* An update on the School Improvement Grant program for low achieving schools, a list that includes Vallejo and Hogan high schools;
- \* Second interim budget report;
- \* Enrollment update;
- \* Closed session regarding negotiations and the Rollingwood property.

Contact staff writer Shauntele Lowe at (707) 553-6835 or [slowe@timesheraldonline.com](mailto:slowe@timesheraldonline.com).

**If you go**

**What:** Vallejo school board meeting

**When:** 6 p.m. Wednesday

**Where:** Vallejo school district office, 665 Walnut Ave., Mare Island

Staff recommended budget cuts

(estimated savings):

Projected 2010-11 deficit: \$6.175 million

- \* Reduce classified overtime (\$250,000)
- \* Reduce maintenance, operations and clerical substitutes (\$300,000)
- \* Reduce district library/textbook support (\$65,000)



- \* Reduce transportation budget (\$100,000)
  - \* Increase K-3 class sizes from 28 to 31 students (\$800,000)
  - \* Maintenance and grounds layoffs (\$700,000)
  - \* Vallejo Educational Academy, Independent Study and Peoples High School layoffs (\$260,000)
  - \* District office layoffs (\$575,000)
  - \* Reduce programs in Special Education (\$560,000)
  - \* Energy conservation (\$180,000)
  - \* Reduce Adult Education (\$1.5 million)
  - \* Reduce summer school (\$287,000)
  - \* Eliminate:
    - \* Peer Assistance and Review Program (\$76,628)
    - \* Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance Program (\$204,900)
    - \* K-5 Physical Education program support (\$146,000)
    - \* K-5 art and music support (\$40,000)
    - \* 1802 Counseling program (\$329,000)
    - \* Community Based Educational Tutoring (\$71,000)
    - \* Pupil Retention Program (\$80,614)
- Total: \$6.5 million



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